



**Welcome Statement by His Excellency, Julius
Maada Bio, President of the Republic of Sierra
Leone at the Inaugural Meeting of the Sierra
Leone Presidential Development Partnership
Committee (DEPAC) Meeting on Tuesday 26th
February, 2019**

Honourable Vice President,

Cabinet Ministers,

DEPAC Co-Chairs,

Development Partners,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning:

It is my pleasure to welcome you all to this inaugural Presidential DEPAC meeting. I am pleased to report that our Medium Term National Development Plan is now at hand. Let me applaud the Minister of Planning and Economic Development, the Minister of Finance, you, our Development Partners, and all the other equally valuable stakeholders whose input severally contributed to the development of this first ever comprehensive National Development Plan.

Development, to my mind, should be predicated on purposeful planning with development priorities and sectors clearly delineated, development

pathways clearly mapped out, and intended development outcomes anticipated in an informed way. The development plan is a shared vision that sharpens focus on strategic goals and facilitates strategic partnerships and collaboration among development partners, MDAs, experts, and policy makers. It also promotes dialogue among all parties and helps all parties avoid possible overlaps of work and waste of resources in sectors or across sectors. This morning, we have our medium term national development plan at hand. This is the right time for this first DEPAC engagement.

The Medium Term National Development plan is a product of what I have emphasised and insisted on in governance– **inclusive and purposeful planning for quality service delivery**. This plan will help us coordinate all available resources (national resources, from our development partners, technical assistance, or from multilateral organizations). Our future annual budgets will be fully aligned to this development plan.

As a government, we are wholeheartedly and resolutely committed to all the priorities identified. My Government will ensure that we do not deviate from the identified priority sectors. The priorities identified are complementary and

mutually reinforcing and my Government believes that if the implementation is properly coordinated, we will create welcome multiplier effects in every sector of the economy. The Minister of Planning and Economic Development will soon give us a brief update on the plan and the implementation arrangements. Human Capital Development is our number one priority with particular focus on free quality education, increased access to affordable healthcare, and incremental food security initiatives within the wider context of good governance. These initiatives will cascade down into new economic opportunities that will improve the standard of living of our people.

My Government also has strong expectations of you, our development partners. We expect that as development partners, we will work together to avoid what I have referred to as wasteful overlaps and duplications. We expect that you will align all assistance and support to the priorities identified in the plan so that we can better estimate the impact of each intervention. We do expect that you, our development partners, will adopt a collaborative and harmonised approach that will ensure that the impact of your interventions is maximised. That approach is the only way we can collectively improve the lives of Sierra Leoneans. So as we listen to the synopsis of the National

Development Plan, I look forward to partners reaffirming commitments and aligning their assistance to the priorities of the plan.

As we strengthen our partnerships. I also urge you to give us frank feedback and suggestions on how we can mobilise the required resources for the successful implementation of the various segments of the plan. We will insist on the comprehensive coordination mechanism contained in the Development Cooperation Framework. My Government is keen to strengthen the partnership with our development partners and make it work for our people and the tax payers of your respective countries who are providing support to

Sierra Leone. We fully subscribe to the principles of mutual transparency and accountability. To ensure that we adhere to those principles, we must continue regular and structured dialogues with you, our partners. This will only enhance coordination and deepen our partnership with you.

Within government, we intend to use the same comprehensively coordinated and inclusive approach that we adopted during the development of the plan. We will ensure that the implementation mechanisms outlined in the document are institutionalised and fully functional. We will adopt and implement best practices that are

adaptable to our unique development context. My government will give all the required support to each cluster working group.

The Ministry of Planning and Economic Development will be the principal coordinating ministry. It will work very closely with you, our development partners, and it will also coordinate the implementation of our National Development Plan. I have instructed the Minister to have a calendar of DEPAC meetings to underscore our commitment to consistently implement the development plan and to also ensure that bottlenecks in the implementation process are addressed in a timely manner. We will therefore

not miss opportunities to gain from your feedback and build consensus on issues bordering on our partnership.

As chair of the g7+ Group of countries, we are committed to development priorities that are specific to our nation's peculiar context through processes owned by us. At the same time, we want our relationship with development partners to be flexible but sufficiently predictable. We expect our partners to be committed and stay committed to our shared goals and realising our national priorities.

Additionally, as I have emphasized elsewhere, my government wants more trade and less aid. We

want to establish a robust and effective private sector that will be a critical bulwark for the development process. Let us continue building that capacity alongside the priorities outlined in the development plan. We believe a strong private sector will enhance the resilience of the development process and make our economy less susceptible to shocks.

Let me conclude, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, by reassuring you of my Government's commitment to strengthening the partnership with all our stakeholders and promoting the principles of mutual transparency and accountability in every facet of our relationship.

Once again, let me welcome you all to this Presidential DEPAC meeting. I look forward to very fruitful deliberations.

I thank you.